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EVOLUTION AND IMPACT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE POLICY IN TAIWAN

By

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A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis takes a look at how English language policy (ELP) in Taiwan has changed over time and how it has affected the education system. This thesis also investigates the different attitudes directed toward ELP, some areas of concern, and problems that have occurred as a result of Taiwan's approach toward ELP. Understanding why Taiwan supports the English language as much as it does while also considering its approach to implementing policy will provide insight on how Taiwan believes that the ELP is a necessary part of globalization.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
ELP	English Language Policy
JCEE	Joint Curriculum Entrance Exam
KMT	Kuomintang
MOE	Ministry of Education
PRC	People's Republic of China
ROC	Republic of China

LIST OF POLICY NAMES

Policy Name in English	Policy Name in Mandarin	Year of Implementation
2030 Bilingual Nation Policy	2030 双语国家政策	2018
Challenge 2008	挑战 2008	2002
Mandarin Policy	国语政策	1946
Nine-year Joint Curriculum	国民中小学九年一贯课程	2001
Plan to Improve Citizens' English Abilities	提升国人英语力建设计划	2009

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to study abroad in Taiwan. While there, one of things that stood out to me was how much time students spent studying English. Taiwanese students start to learn English at an early age and continue studying through high school. I learned this was due to the belief that learning English, a world language, was linked to the idea of future economic success and the need to better understand world issues. Learning another language enables a person to expand their world views, which is vital to becoming a global citizen. For Taiwan, having global citizens was an important part of its path for globalization. Because of this, researching why the English language is so important to Taiwan became the inspiration for my thesis topic.

In order for a country to succeed on the global stage, globalization is necessary. In a broad sense, globalization refers to the interconnectedness of countries' economies, cultures, and ideas through the exchanges of information and services (Peterson Institute for International Economics, 2016). While globalization seeks to create a connection between countries, it also fosters competition. In order for there to be an exchange of information or services, they have to be desired by the recipient by meeting its standards, which, in turn, encourages the provider of the service to go to great lengths to improve its quality, so that they can receive the benefits of the trade. For the purpose of this thesis, globalization refers to countries working to foster better relationships through the economic market.

The country of Taiwan believes that globalization is essential for its development. Through globalization efforts, Taiwan would be able to promote innovation, increase

employment, strengthen global and regional ties while also diversifying international markets (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020). By opening itself up to more foreign markets, Taiwan would be able to foster relationships with other countries besides China, which is still one of Taiwan's most important relationships. By expanding its efforts through globalization, Taiwan believes that it can raise its international status. One way of achieving this is promoting the English language in the classroom and in society.

The English language is a key part of Taiwan's plan for globalization and access to the global markets. Considered to be the language of communication for international trade and business, the status and importance of English is critical throughout the world. Currently, there are around 75 countries which have given English language status in their countries. A quarter of the world's population (around two billion people) has some degree of competency in English and over a majority of the internet content is written in English (Todorova H. & Todorova A., 2018). Because of how prevalent the use of English is, many believe that having a strong background in English will increase job opportunities and international connections. According to a study conducted by the Economist Intelligence Unit (2012) which interviewed 572 executives from various regions of the world, 68 percent of executives believed that their employees knowing English was essential to access global markets.

Due to the economic value placed on English, Taiwan has worked to develop its English language standards through the implementation of various language policies.¹ English has existed as a course subject for secondary education since 1945; however, since 2001, it has been a required subject in elementary schools. Also, Taiwan has implemented ELP dedicated to promoting the use of English in the public sphere (Price, 2014).

¹ Language policy is the body of ideas, regulations, and practices put forward in order to achieve language change in societies or groups (Johnson, 2013).

Taiwan's most recent language policy, which was announced in 2018, is geared toward making the country a "bilingual nation" by raising the standard and use of English in multiple areas. By doing so, Taiwan hopes to encourage more students to travel abroad, which would diversify ideologies and beliefs present in Taiwan, to bring in more business opportunities, and to increase tourism. By aiming for these facets of globalization, Taiwan plans to use its extensive English language policies to raise its international status. By expanding its reach in the global market with citizens with high English proficiency levels, Taiwan seeks to form more informal relationships with countries through trade rather than politics. Establishing these key economic partnerships are vital as Taiwan has an unstable relationship with China.

While Taiwan has ambitious goals for its country development, there are some concerns regarding Taiwan's focus on the English language. One concern pertains to the feasibility of successfully incorporating Taiwan's language standards into the school's curriculum. The demand for teachers, resources, and training are high and require funding, which may be limited. Another concern is related to the importance of developing Taiwanese identity, which was extremely repressed in the twentieth century (Hubbs, 2013). Language is a fundamental part of identity. With the government directing much of its attention to developing its English language curriculum, there are concerns surrounding how much attention is directed toward developing and educating the public about their own cultural roots.

1.1 Research Question

The research question is how Taiwan has approached implementing English language policy (ELP). By examining some important changes in ELP in Taiwan and discussing the impact implementation of these policies has had on Taiwanese society, this thesis shows why Taiwan believes ELP is necessary for its country's development. Also, Taiwan's position on the

international stage during the time of implementation is discussed. The perspectives and concerns of the Taiwanese people will also be considered to gain a more comprehensive understanding of ELP. The purpose of this thesis is not to determine whether or not Taiwan's approaches to ELP have been effective. Instead, it is to see how Taiwan has approached ELP and how this is relevant to its goals for globalization.

1.2 Methodology

For my research methodology, in order to understand Taiwan's ELP, I used the official documents for language policies that have been implemented since 2000. For policies that were implemented before then, due to lack of accessibility, I used secondary sources, such as historical analyses, in order to gain insight on the type of measures implemented. I have also utilized surveys, conducted by other institutes and researchers, in order to evaluate how ELP has been viewed by various demographics of Taiwanese society. Lastly, I used published news articles, so that I could learn more about the most recent developments and issues related to ELP in Taiwan.

1.3 Thesis Overview

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the thesis. Chapter two provides an overview on past ELP and explanation of the conflict between English and indigenous languages. Chapter three identifies how Taiwan's approach to ELP is related to globalization. Chapter four discusses the perspectives of students, parents, and teachers toward ELP in Taiwan. Chapter five addresses the different types of concerns regarding ELP in Taiwan. Chapter six is the conclusion of this thesis.

Chapter 2: Background Information

This chapter primarily focuses on the history of Taiwanese ELP and provides an overview on some of the issues related to their implementation. Taiwanese ELP can be divided into two stages: before and after the start of the twenty-first century. While ELP did have some progress during the 1900's, all of the most substantial changes to Taiwan's ELP occurred after 2001. Because of these changes, a high value of importance was placed on English education, so much so it has affected the amount of time spent on Taiwan's indigenous languages.

2.1 Previous English Policies (1912-1990's)

Since the foundation of the Republic of China (ROC) in 1912, English has been present in Taiwan's education system. Taiwan's approach to English education, as well as its other local languages, are reflective of the political and economic concerns that Taiwan faced at different points in its history. Because of this, Taiwan's approach to the English language in its education system has two distinct phases: the policies and measures implemented before 2001 and those implemented after.

The status of English during the 1900's steadily rose over the years. In 1912, English was chosen as the required foreign language class for secondary education. (Lin, 2007). Under Japanese rule, English was temporarily disregarded as a mandatory course but still remained the most commonly taught foreign language (Lin, 2007). After the end of Japanese colonization, when the Kuomintang (KMT), the Nationalist Party of China, took control of the island, having a foundation in English was necessary to access higher education. In 1954, when the Joint College Entrance Exam (JCEE) was created, an examination for university admission, the JCEE included

an English section. In 1968, English became the only required foreign language course in schools (Wu, 2009).

During the 1960's, the KMT reached out to the United States as a way to aid in Taiwan's economic development. To improve the country, KMT focused on cultivating college students' knowledge by sending them abroad in to the United States. Students who studied the natural sciences and engineering were the first to go since those skills were in a higher demand in Taiwan. Students studying other subjects would follow. During the 1970's and 1980's, thousands of students went to the United States to study (Lynch, 2002).

English education policies during the twentieth century had a much narrower purpose than they do now. For example, older English policies focused more on reading and writing skills for academic and professional purposes (Chen, 2010). It was not until the 1960's that the purpose of English classes shifted from a grammar-focused curriculum and more to a focus on oral language skills.

After martial law was lifted in 1987 and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) came into power, in the 1990's, Taiwan underwent many reforms and changes in its political views, especially toward language. During the last two decades of the twentieth century, multilingualism and diversity heavily influenced the types of policies the Taiwanese government was working to implement, including ELP (Hubbs, 2013).²

2.2 Recent English Policies (2001-current)

The year of 2001 is important in terms of ELP. It represents a considerable change in Taiwan's approach to education. For instance, in 2001, with the introduction of the Nine-year

² Multilingualism refers to having linguistic competence in three or more languages (Language Files: Materials for an Introduction to Language and Linguistics, 2016).

Joint Curriculum (国民中小学九年一贯课程) by the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Taiwanese education system underwent a massive reform in order to prepare students to better meet the demands of the global economy and to better understand the importance of multiculturalism. A portion of this policy was dedicated toward making changes in the current standards for English education. One of the most significant changes of this policy was that it moved English education to start in elementary school, specifically in the fifth and sixth grades (MOE, 2003). Previously, the requirement was that students started English classes in middle school during their seventh-grade year. A couple years later though, English classes would be moved further down to the third grade. The goals of this policy focused on developing students' English language skills, so that they could be used in real life situations; developing students' learning methods, with the aim that they could learn English more effectively; and strengthening students' understanding of their own country's and foreign countries' customs and beliefs, so that they may understand and respect cultural differences (MOE, 2003).

In 2002, another policy called Challenge 2008 (挑战 2008) was implemented. This policy was a six-year national development plan for the years 2002-2007 that focused on improving Taiwan's economic growth. This development plan included measures for a variety of sectors, but it also had measures for the promotion of the English language (MOE, 2002). These measures, however, were not just restricted to the education system. In addition to English learning in schools, the policy also included efforts to promote English in society. Some of these measures were to improve citizens' overall English proficiency levels, create English-friendly environments through the use of bilingual signs, menus, and websites, and create English broadcast shows and radio programs.

The next major national ELP that was implemented was the Plan to Improve Citizens' English Abilities (提升国人英语力建设计划), which was introduced a year after the KMT party was elected into office. This policy's goals, which were introduced in 2009, were to improve the Taiwanese people's English language skills while also strengthening Taiwan's international competitiveness (Executive Yuan Research and Development Evaluation Committee, 2009). This policy's five implementation strategies were to recruit English professionals, establish a field for English-context learning, use English to increase city competitiveness (through the use of English labeling in the city), use English to improve quality of international services, and incorporate the use of English in business and government settings.

The most recent and most ambitious ELP is the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy (2030 双语国家政策) which was first announced in 2018. The overall goal of this massive policy is to create a bilingual education system in Taiwan by 2030 in order to use these skills to aid in the achievement of Taiwan's globalization goals. This policy involves a series of policies that have been released over the past couple years to provide goals and changes in order to promote English throughout Taiwanese society. Two key objectives of this policy are to improve the English language skills of the Taiwanese people by improving English learning platforms, media resources, and bilingual education and to strengthen international competitiveness and provide job opportunities to the Taiwanese people, which would enhance Taiwan's economic development (National Development Council, 2018). The Taiwanese government is currently in process of implementing policies and measures in order to fulfill the goals of the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy.

2.3 Competition between English and Indigenous Languages

While Mandarin is the most commonly used official language in Taiwan, it is not the only one. In fact, there are other types of languages, Taiwanese Southern Min, Hakka, and the various Taiwanese aboriginal languages, that receive official status. After Mandarin, the second most spoken language is Taiwanese Southern Min and is spoken by 70 percent of the population (Hubbs, 2013). Another language group, Hakka is spoken by about 12 percent of the population while the remaining group, the aboriginal languages of Taiwan, is only about spoken by less than half of the indigenous groups, which make up around 2 percent of the population (Pawan, 2004). Although these languages currently are considered official languages and a significant part of Taiwanese culture, they were not always supported by the government and were suppressed, especially before the 1990's, where they experienced decades of being banned.

Despite the government's attempts to support indigenous languages, there is still a great disparity in how much time, resources, and attention have been devoted to promoting English compared to local languages, as well as people's overall perspectives regarding them. In the education system, students receive more hours of instruction in English than in indigenous languages and are also more likely to start English classes earlier than the third grade or attend additional classes at cram schools. Moreover, resources for English classes are more abundant and standardized, whereas resources for indigenous languages, which do not receive as much funding, are limited and irregular (Hubbs, 2013).

There is also a divide between how the public views the English language and certain local languages. Teachers, students, and parents see English as a beneficial language and is necessary in order to expand job opportunities while also believing that indigenous languages, on the other hand, are not as advantageous in terms of future success (Hung, 2013). Discussions

regarding the importance of indigenous languages are split further due to different stances towards the teaching of local languages. Educators believe that the indigenous languages are not focused enough in schools which causes conflict with the opposing view from parents that indigenous languages should be taught at home (Hubbs, 2013).

2.4 Language Policy and Political Parties

2.4.1 KMT Policies

When the KMT in 1945 regain control from the Japanese, they adopted a similar approach to language policy, which was dedicated to suppressing local languages. In order to create a unified country, the KMT adopted monocultural and monolingual policies. The KMT disregarded the value of Taiwan's local languages and cultures. During these years, the KMT made Mandarin the official language of the country, while continuing to ban local languages and Japanese (Hubbs, 2013).

While under Japanese rule, the linguistic landscape in Taiwan was predominantly Japanese and the surviving indigenous languages. In order to promote Mandarin Chinese in a country which mostly spoke Japanese at the time, the KMT government implemented their Mandarin Policy (国语政策) and movement in 1946. This policy included the use of Mandarin in official institutions and schools, while also further restricting the use of indigenous languages. During the 1960's, indigenous television programs, for example, were only allowed to air for less than one hour a day and by the 1970's, any surviving programs were forced to switch to Mandarin (Huang, 2016). In the school system, students were punished if caught speaking their local languages.

In addition to Mandarin-only policies enforced throughout the country, the KMT also had a China-centered education system. In the interest of maintaining a unified country, the KMT

gave the government control of the curriculum and textbooks. As a result, educational stances and ideologies that aligned with KMT values spread throughout society while Taiwanese identity suffered. For example, schools taught students Chinese history and culture, such as the Chinese dynasties and opera instead of Taiwanese history (Wu, 2009).

The oppressive measures that the KMT carried out during their time in power fell apart when the DPP took control in 2000, although they left a permanent footprint across several generations. After spending decades under the KMT and Japanese rule, Taiwan's politics began to democratize, which led to many changes in society. Under the KMT, a unified country meant having one language and one culture, but with democratization, a new ideology that supported the various languages and ethnic groups of Taiwan emerged. As a result, new language policies were implemented in order to encourage the use of local languages. However, the indigenous language policies were implemented along with new ELP. As a result, the simultaneous promotion of local languages and English would create competition for support and resources.

2.4.2 DPP Policies

When the DPP started to take power in the 2000's, there were several efforts of leaving behind the formerly implemented monocultural and monolingual policies from the government (Chen, 2010), and one significant change was the acceptance of multiculturalism. Efforts were made to revitalize indigenous languages and help minority groups. During this time, the term "Taiwanization" was popularized in order to describe the experience of the people of Taiwan regaining the local identity that was suppressed or lost under Taiwan's previous leadership (Wu, 2009). In recent studies, Taiwanization refers to the process of self-identification for Taiwanese people (Lams & Liao, 2011).

The implementation of the Nine-year Joint Curriculum was another way that helped with Taiwan's plan to revitalize indigenous languages. Instead of having a policy that would forbid the use of local languages, the Nine-year Joint Curriculum made it a requirement from first grade to sixth grade that students be taught an indigenous language (MOE, 2003). Efforts were also made during the early 2000's to make indigenous languages official languages, but due to criticisms, like cost, the policy was rejected (Wu, 2009). It would not be until 2019 when Hakka and Taiwanese Southern Min were granted official language status. Later that same year, the National Language Development Policy (国家语言发展法), which was designed to protect and treat Taiwan's official languages equally, was implemented, showcasing another effort from the government to try and support local languages.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter primarily focuses on the history of Taiwanese ELP and provides an overview on some of the issues related to their implementation. Taiwanese ELP can be divided into two stages: before and after the start of the twenty-first century. While ELP did see some progress during the 1900's, all of the most drastic changes to Taiwan's ELP occurred after 2001. The result of these changes placed a high value on the importance of English in education, so much so that it has affected the amount of time spent on Taiwan's indigenous languages.

Chapter 3: Globalization and Education

A fundamental aspect of globalization is the exchange of goods, services, and ideas. To do this as successfully as possible, access to global markets is essential. Having a presence on the international stage has many advantages such as fostering competition between markets, forming international connections, and raising a country's status. These benefits, as well as pressure from China, have driven Taiwan to strive toward achieving its goals for globalization, especially by combining language education and policy making.

3.1 New English Education Emerges from Globalization

During the late twentieth century, the international stage was experiencing new changes as technology advanced. During this time period, countries and major cities on the international stage, such as the United States, Hong Kong, and South Korea started to move away from the labor-intensive to an information-based economy (Hatch & Clinton, 2000; Law, 2004; Lee et al, 2009). Taiwan, a country which had relied on its large and hardworking labor force to support its economy (White, 1999), needed to make adjustments, so that its people could be better prepared for the changing world (Law, 2004). To aid in the initiation of some of these changes Taiwan looked toward education reform.

Adjusting the education system to meet the demands of a new century was considered to be a necessary step by the Taiwanese government. New education policies, such the Nine-year Joint Curriculum, designed to help the development of skills students would need to be able to function in the global market, like learning English. Taiwan's belief that English is a significant part of globalization is not unfounded. The English language is the most common means of communication and information exchanges. Data shows that, English, as generally defined, has

about two billion speakers, which is about 25 percent of the population. Also, English has official language status in 75 countries, and is the preferred language of communication in the United Nations. Not only is it the language of business, but it is also the predominant language for politics, science and medicine, academics, and the internet and considered to be the *lingua franca* for the communication between nations and cultures (Todorova N. & Todorova A., 2018).³ In order to be able to have a strong presence in any of these different contexts at the international level, knowing English is essential. As a result, the demand for English language abilities is high in many countries, and Taiwan is no exception.

3.2 Shifts in Policy

To stay on the path of strengthening the country's development, Taiwan has implemented a few policies promoting English in the last two decades, as mentioned in chapter one. During these past twenty years, there have been two major shifts in how Taiwan has approached English learning. These shifts occurred during times of political and economic change in Taiwan.

The implementation of the Nine-year Joint Curriculum policy in 2001 signified the first major policy shift. Part of the measures of this policy were the result of Taiwan being conscientious of how the world was moving more toward information exchange. Because of this development, more attention needed to be spent on educating students about global issues. To do this, the Nine-year Joint Curriculum specifically included the cultivation of students' transnational skills. These transnational skills consisted of global awareness, critical thinking, and foreign language skills (Law, 2004). For the foreign language skills aspect, English was the chosen language. It was moved down from the junior high school to the elementary school,

³ *Lingua Franca* refers to the language that is most commonly used for basic communication (Gass et al., 2020).

demonstrating how much value the government was placing on the necessity of English, so Taiwan could keep up with a globalizing economy.

After the government introduced a policy that handled how the education system in light of global changes, another policy, Challenge 2008, was introduced in 2002 to start promoting English in society. Part of Challenge 2008 measures were to create bilingual signs and menus to increase the use of English outside the school system. Additionally, this policy also introduced the proposal of making English a semi-official language. While this proposal never came to fruition, this does show how willing the government was to include English as a part of Taiwanese life.

The second major shift in ELP was the implementation of the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy, introduced in 2018 by the DPP. In this case, the government approached ELP in a different way. Previous ELP had difficulties meeting their goals due to lack of support and resources. Challenge 2008, for example, met resistance when it tried to improve the English language skills of people who were the most likely to interact with foreigners, such as the taxi drivers, police officers, and ticket-sellers. The fact that business could still be done and most foreigners know some Mandarin are a couple of reasons why these groups of people had very little interest in supporting Challenge 2008 (Chen, 2010). When the Nine-year Joint Curriculum was first implemented, there was a shortage of English teachers. Efforts were made by the government to recruit an additional 3,000 teachers, but it was not enough to satisfy all of the schools' needs (Price, 2014).

With the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy, the government made great efforts to include plans and goals in different sectors and organizations to increase the overall support of policy. In addition to schools, government agencies, public service providers, and civil servants are some

of the areas that are setting goals for translating documents into English and increasing their employees' English proficiency levels.

Another area that is vital to the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy is tourism. Part of the policy was to make the country English-friendly, not just for the purpose of enhancing the country's overall English proficiency but to also make it more welcoming for foreigners. This is to encourage more foreigners to come to Taiwan for jobs, schooling, or even tourism, all of which would help boost Taiwan's economy. Furthermore, it would help form more foreign connections, which Taiwan is currently in need of, due to the growing tensions with Taiwan and one of its most important political and economic partners, the People's Republic of China (PRC).

3.3 Cross-Strait Relations

Part of Taiwan's goal for increasing its competitiveness is related to its complex relationship with the PRC. As part of its One China policy, the PRC has claimed ownership over Taiwan for decades since the KMT, who came from Mainland China, took control of Taiwan in 1945. Taiwan has disputed this claim for years; however, due to the PRC's influence, power, and the general complexity of present cross-strait politics, Taiwan is still heavily impacted by Mainland China's actions and very dependent on their relationship for economic and political reasons.

Because the PRC believes Taiwan to be a part of it, it does not believe that Taiwan should be recognized as an independent country or as a separate body from Mainland China while the PRC is the leader of the two. This is referred to as the One China Policy. Those who disagree with this policy, are refused diplomatic recognition from the PRC. Because of this, Taiwan's ability to operate on the international stage and path toward globalization have been hindered.

While Taiwan has established avenues for global trade with many countries, Taiwan's official diplomatic relationships are very few due to the One China Policy. Countries that receive support from the PRC are usually required to reject the claim that Taiwan is an independent country. Because the PRC's influence and power are much greater than Taiwan's, countries usually agree to establishing an official diplomatic relationship with Mainland China since Taiwan does not have much to offer. The PRC's ability to influence Taiwan's diplomatic relationships was evident in 2016 when Taiwan lost almost one third of its partners to Beijing (Glaser et al., 2020).

Since the PRC has negatively affected Taiwan's political presence on the international stage, fostering relationships through other methods, such as education, trade, and business, is one of Taiwan's reasons for placing so much emphasis on globalization. One of the ways that Taiwan does this is through its implementation of ELP. This is especially crucial as currently Taiwan only has diplomatic relations with 15 other countries. Since 2016, Taiwan lost the support from seven countries to the PRC (BBC News). By raising its English education standards, Taiwan aims to increase its status and competitiveness in other fields to help continue the country's development and establish more ties with other countries.

3.4 Conclusion

On its journey to develop the country, Taiwan has placed a great amount of emphasis on the importance of globalization and, in turn, the English language. In order for Taiwan to maintain its position on the global stage, the Taiwanese government has relied on the implementation of ELP due to the high value English has in the world. The policies implemented during the last twenty years are the result of Taiwan's need to continue advancing its economy and participating in global markets. The policies are also a sign of the importance Taiwan is

placing on developing more foreign connections, especially during a time when its relationship with China is problematic.

Chapter 4: Attitudes Towards English Language Policy

A key factor in the success of government policy is the level of support it has, especially when it relies heavily on the opinions and actions of the people in order to achieve its goals. Because of this, understanding the attitudes and perspectives of various groups toward policy are essential. However, simply knowing that a policy is supported by the public is not enough. It is also necessary to know what specific areas of a policy have the people's support and what areas have become problematic.

For Taiwan's ELP, there are several different sides to consider when assessing the level of support to English education. There are the students at the elementary school and college levels, the parents, and the educators to take under consideration in order to form an assessment of how people in Taiwan view the country's English education and government language policy. This chapter will look at various studies previously conducted that surveyed the attitudes of the previously mentioned demographics in order to gather a general understanding of how English education and the government's ELPs are viewed in Taiwan.

4.1 Students' Perspectives

Two studies of students at two different grade levels will be discussed in this section. The first study includes fifth grade students while the second study includes college-aged students. These studies were chosen due to the age range and type of questions asked to the participants regarding their attitudes toward Taiwan's English education.

4.1.1 Elementary Students' Perspectives

In a study conducted by Liu (2016), the perspectives of fifth grade students were surveyed. The study asked questions related to the students' English learning experience and

their feelings towards the government's policy on learning English in elementary school while also looking at what factors could have influenced their attitudes. The participants were 25 fifth grade students from Taipei city and had anywhere from three to seven years of English education.

The overall results of the students' general attitude towards English education was positive, with 60 percent of students stating they were "happy", compared to the 40 percent who said they were "unhappy". The students were then asked about their reasons for studying English. The survey concluded that the two main reasons were due to parents' wishes and school requirements while only one student said that they studied for pleasure. While only one student held this opinion for their reason for studying, 11 other students did say they did have an interest in the English language. One of the negatives that the study did find was that students believed that their English classes would be better if classes were more engaging, such as including a variety of interesting topics. As for students' attitudes towards the government policy, 18 out of the 25 students supported the policy.

Despite the fact that the overall general feelings of English classes were split, a majority of students supported the government's stance on learning English in school. The study did speculate that this was most likely due to the students' own anxiety towards learning a language in a classroom setting as for why the student's general feelings toward their English classes and their attitudes towards government policy are different.

4.1.2 College Students' Perspectives

In addition to looking at elementary school students, it is also necessary to look at the other end of the educational spectrum by surveying what college students think about English education and language policy in Taiwan. In a study conducted by Huang (2005), the attitudes of

30 college students were surveyed. The students were from different universities and from different academic fields in order to have a diversified selection of participants. The survey questions were centered around how students viewed the presence of the English language in their lives and how their understanding relates to the globalization of English.

The findings of this research showed that the college students also had positive attitudes towards English education. The students believed that English was a powerful language that was needed for Taiwan's economic development as well as provided more access to information and job opportunities. The students also favored the English language because of its status in the world and did not view the increasing use and acceptance of English as dominating and oppressive. Instead, the students believed that English was a useful tool for communication.

In addition to English, this survey also asked questions regarding students' attitudes toward the local language, Taiwanese Southern Min. It is worth noting that according to the study, the students did not believe it was controversial that unlike the English, Taiwanese Southern Min was not being considered as an official language. While Taiwanese Southern Min was seen as an important part of Taiwanese culture and history, the students believed the language's usefulness was extremely limited compared to English's and, as a result, was not eligible for official language status. It should be noted that this study was published in 2005, which was over a decade before Taiwanese Southern Min and other indigenous languages were granted official recognition.

4.2 Parents' Perspectives

In addition to understanding the students' perspectives towards English education, it is also pertinent to look at parents' attitudes. Parents are also a key part in ensuring the success of implementation of education policy as they are the ones responsible for their children's

education. If policy does not meet parents' expectations, then it will not receive their support and a disconnect between the people and the government will form.

In a study conducted by Chang (2008), approximately 500 parents of second graders were surveyed regarding their children's English education and their thoughts on government policy. The results of the survey revealed that 94.7 percent of the parents believed that English was important in Taiwanese society. The study also revealed that even though government policy required students to study English starting at the third grade, all of the surveyed parents' children had already begun learning English, with 41.3 percent also attending cram schools to study English. In fact, according to the survey about two-thirds of parents had their children learning English at the kindergarten level. The large percentage of students already learning English before the government requirement shows that the need and desire for studying English at an early age is high as well as the difference between what the parents believe and what the government believes to be a suitable age for learning English.

As for parents' feelings toward the government policy of learning English in general, while most were supportive of their children learning English, there was a divide between whether or not English should be considered as an official language. 53.5 percent of parents believed that English should be an official language because of the importance it has to globalization and trade. Those who disagreed with the notion of English becoming an official language gave a variety of reasons. The two most common reasons were that not every person needs to learn English and English as an official language could interfere with maintaining Taiwan's national identity.

4.3 Elementary School Teachers' Perspectives

Ke (2014) researched the attitudes of homeroom teachers from different elementary schools in Taiwan. The study focused on the teachers' general feelings toward English education as well as any issues that they or their students faced while studying English. The number of participants only consisted of 11 teachers, who were thoroughly interviewed; however, the teachers came from five different elementary schools with most teachers having some experience teaching English classes, which helped in providing different perspectives elicited from the study.

The results of the study showed that almost all teachers viewed English education and English in elementary schools as a necessity. Homeroom teachers who had taught English and homeroom teachers who had not both supported the idea that more time should be devoted to English classes. In addition to this, a couple of teachers believed that English classes could benefit those living in remote areas.

Although English classes were generally favored by the teachers, they also included certain issues that they had encountered. There were concerns that students' varying English proficiencies at the elementary level would only worsen when transitioning to junior high school. The homeroom teachers also worried that immense pressure for students to learn another language at a very young age was too much of a strain. This was further supported by one of the teachers interviewed who believed that too much time was spent on students' achievements in English and not on actual student development, which at the elementary level is key.

4.4 Discussion of Studies

The one aspect that all of these studies have in common is the overall acceptance of English education. Across all demographics, every group supported studying English and had the

general consensus that the purpose of English classes influenced and benefited the country's or students' development in some way. Many of the parents, college students, and educators related increased job opportunities and economic development to the importance and necessary demand of teaching English in schools. This belief is supported by a survey conducted by Education First (EF) which has been studying the relationship between countries' English proficiency levels and success. EF's research has shown that countries with high English skills are more likely to be more equal and more innovative than those that have lower English levels while also showing a correlation between those who have high English language abilities and income (EF, 2020).

Not only was English education viewed in a positive light, there were also several parents and educators who believed that English should be taught at an earlier age, such as the first grade. On the parents' side, this is mostly due to fears regarding their children falling behind other children who may have access to better English resources or started learning English earlier than other students (Chang, 2008). While the national policy requires students to start learning at the third grade, it is not uncommon for schools to begin teaching English earlier. Some schools start teaching English at the kindergarten level and some parents will even enroll their children in daycare centers that teach English. Since students start learning English at different ages, there is a strong desire to lower the national requirement of when English is taught in elementary schools in order to help reduce the English learning gap between students, so that students' English levels would be more equal.

An additional shared problem between groups was the type of content being used to teach English. For the elementary students and parents, the lack of diversity and engaging learning materials were viewed as problematic. For the children, it affected their motivation and interaction with English learning. Motivation is essential for learning, especially a language, and

greatly impacts how a student will engage with that subject later on (Alizadeh, 2016). If students start having negative feelings toward studying English starting at the elementary level, then it can impact their way of viewing the importance of studying English further down their education career and even their life. If this is a widespread problem, then it would impact the effectiveness of Taiwan's various English policies, which have the goal to increase English use throughout the country.

Another issue that was raised between parents and teachers was the amount of time devoted toward English. Based on the studies, although the majority of teachers and parents believed that more time should be spent toward English classes, some did claim that the amount of focus spent on English was not necessary or negatively impacted other areas. Some of these areas included concerns over the impact English could have on Taiwan's national identity (Chang, 2008), and the level of competitiveness that has risen between schools, students, and even teachers over receiving achievements and high rankings in English education (Ke, 2014). These concerns are discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5: Areas of Concern

While Taiwan's languages policies are intended to help improve its status, concerns regarding the amount of attention the government has dedicated toward English and the actual effectiveness of the government policies have been raised. This chapter will look at these issues in more detail. The purpose of discussing these issues is not to provide solutions for these problems but to provide more insight on what areas in Taiwan's ELP have become problematic and why.

5.1 General Issues with English in Early Education

There is a common belief that the earlier English is studied the better. This idea has become prevalent throughout Taiwanese society (Lin, 2016) as many parents believe that English should be taught at an early age, and some of whom believe it should be taught earlier than the third grade. Part of the reason why parents are worried about when their children start English is due to the fact that there is a strong perceived relation between a person's English abilities and social and economic benefits (Chen, 2013). Because of this, many parents enroll their students at an early age in English classes in hopes that they will have a stronger foundation in English.

One of the main reasons students are enrolled earlier than the third grade is due to a divide between parents' expectations, government policies, and individual school curriculum. Due to the high demand of English, it is common for schools in Taiwan to teach English earlier than the third grade. Because of a decentralized English curriculum, schools have freedom to adjust English classes and content, which has resulted in a disparity between the English

education across different schools (Chen, 2013); some schools teach English starting at the third grade whereas others teach English earlier.

Due to the gap between English classes among different elementary schools, there is a concern from parents that their children will fall behind their peers academically, if their children do not start learning English before the third grade. As a result, enrolling students in cram schools is a common solution to introduce the English language to them earlier. At the cram schools, the students are able to engage with more interesting and advanced materials and are satisfying their parents' expectations for their English education (Osada & Tanaka, 2012).

Although enrollment at a cram school might be the solution for the parents, it leads to a problem on the teachers' side. Since it is common for many students to have already begun learning English at cram schools, by the time they make it to the third grade when English is taught by the school, the proficiency levels of the students in a given classroom are extremely varied and unequal. Therefore, the elementary school teachers are faced with the problem of trying to teach and accommodate students with little or no English learning and those with two or more years of experience (Osada & Tanaka, 2012).

Another issue that arises when looking at English education at the elementary level are the struggles that students encounter when transitioning to junior high school. The teaching methods of English in elementary school are very different from those used in junior high school. Elementary schools focus on an oral approach to learning English, and many games and activities are involved in the students' learning processes. At the junior high school, however, that is not the case. Starting at the seventh grade, English classes focus on grammar-based instruction, imitation and repetition, and note taking (Lin, 2016).

As a result, the gap in teaching methods creates learning problems for students who are not accustomed to the junior high methods. While some elementary school teachers do try to include the grammar-based approach to help prepare them for junior high classes (Osada & Tanaka, 2012), not every teacher does, so there are students who have a difficult time adapting to the new teaching methods. This transition problem is believed to be the result of not having a standardized policy for English curriculum.

5.2 Teaching Indigenous Languages and English

When the Nine-year Joint Curriculum was introduced, it not only made changes in English education, but it also included the requirement of teaching indigenous languages, starting at the first grade (MOE, 2002). Which language is taught is determined by each school based on its available resources. In most cases, Taiwanese Southern Min is chosen since it is the most commonly spoken indigenous language and is the most likely to find someone with a background in that language. This was part of the government's plan to help revitalize indigenous languages and local Taiwanese culture which had previously suffered under Japanese and KMT leadership. While the intentions of the policy were aimed toward helping teach English and indigenous languages, it was not without issues. Concerns about the amount of focus indigenous languages have actually received while the demand for English has increased.

One of the main issues regarding language education in schools is the level of attention English receives when compared to indigenous languages. While the current Taiwanese government does support both, there has been much more emphasis on the importance of English. As a result, more schools allocated more class time to English learning anywhere from one to six hours, depending on the school, while indigenous language classes typically remain at only one hour per week (Chien et al, 2013).

The different levels of support not only affect the amount of time granted for classes but also the amount of resources and teachers and quality of instruction. For English classes, more resources, such as textbooks, learning materials, and learning programs, are provided while indigenous languages classes' resources are severely limited (Hubbs, 2013). Also, there are more qualified English teachers than there are teachers for indigenous languages. As for language instruction, due to the difference in priority, indigenous languages classes do not have well-developed teaching models, like English, and mostly used vocabulary lists as a point of instruction (Hubbs, 2013).

The various issues of inequality between English and indigenous languages are not the only problems surrounding multilingual education policy. There is also the view that students are being taught too many languages at such an early age. In addition to English and local languages, students are also learning Mandarin. If multiple languages are introduced at early ages in a classroom setting while a child is still learning their native language, the question that is raised is how will the child's language abilities be influenced. For example, a study conducted by Tai (2000) discovered that students' Taiwanese pronunciation interfered with their English pronunciation on certain sounds and a study by Lin (2002) showed students' knowledge of the English phonetic system hindered their ability to learn the phonetic system of another local language (Chien et al., 2013).

5.3 The 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy

The most recent concern regarding ELP in Taiwan is the implementation of the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy. This policy aims to make English a priority by improving the people's English communication skills, so that they can connect with the world. Because the policy is still in its beginning stages, not much academic research has been conducted on the level of

effectiveness of the policy. However, the Taiwanese people have voiced their concerns over some potential problems that could occur. This section will look at what are some initial worries that the Taiwanese people have and why they are relevant to the implementation of Taiwan's latest and largest approach to promoting the English language.

Almost all of the concerns related to the 2030 Bilingual Policy pertain to how ambitious it is. This policy involves a wide range of institutions in order to meet its goal of creating a bilingual society, some of which have already followed through on some measures. For example, Citibank Taiwan and Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. (the world's largest contract chipmaker) have provided an assortment of English workshops and training sessions to their employees within the last couple of years (Watt, 2021). In 2019, several ministries of the government began translating their respective government-related content, such as rules and regulations, policies, and even websites, into English while also establishing various bilingual services (National Development Council, 2020).

While some organizations and government agencies may have direction on how to follow the 2030 Bilingual Policy expectations, the path for connecting the policy to the daily lives of the Taiwanese people is not as clear. Some ideas have been considered, such as providing both English and Chinese subtitles for any English language film shown in a theater, and some have been partially seen through, like creating bilingual radio programs (Watt, 2021). However, there is still much debate about how to effectively implement the policy outside of the education system while also maintaining the support of the people.

Because of how wide-reaching this policy is, a large budget is necessary to carry out its implementation. For the first two years, the National Development Council, whose primary function is to create policy for the Taiwanese government, allocated \$146.4 million towards

implementation efforts (Watt, 2021). However, there is concern of whether or not the effort and money would be better spent on just improving the school systems' language education as a way to aid in Taiwan's goals for globalization. Currently, the Taiwanese education system has many issues, such as a lack of resources and inconsistent policies, which could be alleviated if more funding and time were given. Although the 2030 Bilingual National Policy does largely plan to focus on improving bilingual education, the question, in this case, is whether or not the government should only concentrate its resources on improving bilingual education in the school system, so that it does not stretch itself too thin while also trying to implement and enforce policies in the public sphere.

Due to the amount of attention and resources that are currently being provided to this policy, there are increasing fears that indigenous languages and education will be even more negatively impacted than they are now. The 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy is not intended to interfere with the local languages, but in considering the current conflicts between English and indigenous languages, the Taiwanese people, particularly educators, have expressed their doubts (Wei, 2020).

One final area of concern is that this type of policy is unprecedented, and thus there are too many unknowns as to where this policy will lead or what type of problems it could encounter. The 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy does not have any prior model to be compared to (Watt, 2021). Other countries, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, do have extensive English policies, but their relationship with the English language, which came from colonialism, is much different from Taiwan's. Therefore, it presents a number of questions: Will this policy be effective? How do we measure its "effectiveness"? What additional issues could occur ten years or more from now? How would we prepare and address those issues?

5.4 Conclusion

While the overall public perceives English positively and supports the idea that English is necessary for the country's development, many issues occur in the actual execution of ELP and curriculum. These issues are tangled together and are not easily resolved. Parents wish that English was taught earlier due to fears of their children being left behind because of disparities in curriculums and government policies, so they enroll their children into cram schools. Enrolling students in cram schools creates problems in the classroom because there are now students with various levels of English proficiency, which makes it difficult for teachers to adequately adjust their teaching to the needs of all their students. The emphasis on English is important, but it fosters too much competition with indigenous languages. The adoption of more ELP to help improve the country may also create more issues.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

My research question was how has Taiwan approached the implementation of ELP throughout the country. My research shows that Taiwan firmly believes that it is necessary for its people to have a strong foundation in English in order for the country to advance. The English language has a high status on the international stage and in order to further its reach internationally, Taiwan has decided to continually develop its ELP.

Taiwan has approached ELP in a variety of ways. First, through the implementation of the Nine-year Joint Curriculum, where English classes were moved from the junior high level to the third grade. Then, through Challenge 2008, the Taiwanese government tried to promote English throughout society by encouraging the creation of bilingual signs and programs. With the Plan to Improve Citizens' English Abilities, the government began to incorporate English in more business and social settings. The most recent policy, the 2030 Bilingual Nation Policy, not only includes measures to improve English learning in the education system, but it also consists of measures for the public.

These various policies were implemented with the intention of aiding Taiwan's economic development. Since English is considered to be the preferred language for many international fields, such as business and commerce, the English language in Taiwan has a high status of importance; thus, the government, schools, and people of Taiwan have dedicated much time and resources towards cultivating English language skills.

By promoting English throughout the country, Taiwan hopes to achieve its goals for globalization. With a higher proficiency in English and more global awareness, Taiwan hopes to connect to more global markets. In addition to trade, promoting English in Taiwanese society

will also aid Taiwan's academic, business, and tourism sectors. A more English-friendly environment would encourage more students to study abroad, more foreigners to conduct their businesses in Taiwan, and more tourists willing to visit. All these factors can help elevate Taiwan's status on the international scale.

Taiwan's approach toward implementing ELP, however, has encountered obstacles. Even though the public is generally supportive of the English language, there are concerns regarding how prevalent the English language should be in society and in education and how Taiwan's national and local identities would be affected. Consequently, there is much pressure to be able to maintain a balance between Taiwan's goal of globalization and its goals for strengthening its native culture as well.

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